

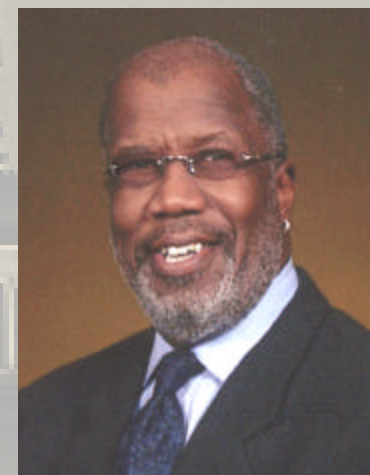
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State Information Center	800-457-8283

Contact
Representative
Charlie Brown
District 3

Statehouse
200 W. Washington
Indianapolis, IN 46204
800-382-9842

Online
H3@in.gov
www.in.gov/H3



Representative Charlie Brown

Will you be able to vote?

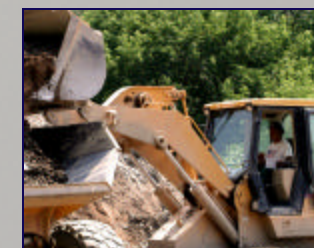
Due to new state laws, you will be required to have a valid Indiana state picture ID to vote on Primary Election Day—May 2. Please visit my web-site, www.in.gov/H3, to learn more about this law and how to obtain an identification card and rules concerning absentee voting.



Representative Charlie Brown
Indiana House of Representatives
200 W. Washington
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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Working for You



Strengthening Eminent Domain Laws



Helping Hoosier Families



Property Tax Relief

2006 Session Report

Additional Property Tax RELIEF

At the start of the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, property tax relief was identified as a priority by members of both parties. When the smoke cleared, we were able to provide some relief for homeowners.

This year, about 1.5 million homeowners will receive a one-time increase in the state homestead credit from 20 to 28 percent. This credit will provide around \$100 million in property tax relief in 2006.

In 2007, the state homestead deduction will increase from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for one year only. This relief will provide an additional \$127 million in relief for homeowners.

Starting in 2008, the state will gradually phase in a cap on property tax bills at two percent of a home's value. This cap would apply to all classes of property in Indiana, starting in 2010.

While this relief is welcome, it still does not make up for the massive increases in local property taxes that were passed on to home and business owners through the biennial state budget approved in 2005 by the Republicans leading our state's government. At the time, that budget increased the burden on local property taxpayers to the tune of an estimated \$850 million.

And that means you are still going to see your property taxes go up when you get your next tax bill. The time to have enacted true, lasting property tax relief was 2005, but nothing was done by those in charge.



Rep. Brown

A summary of new legislation

SEX OFFENDERS



A series of bills continue our state's efforts to crack down on sex offenders. The bills clarify the designation of "sexually violent predator," require sex offenders to wear GPS tracking devices, establish lifetime parole for these offenders, ban sex offenders' access to locations where children may be present, keep better track of sex offenders' whereabouts with the new DOC sex offender registry, and make the crime of human trafficking of a minor a felony.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

Indiana is moving forward with its improved health initiative, which encourages healthier eating habits among school children by requiring school vending machines to offer more "better choice" food items.

SCHOOL SAFETY



We have attempted to ensure the safety of schoolchildren and to protect school employees by making possession of a knife on school property or a school bus a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to a 180-day prison term or a fine of \$1,000.

DRUG ABUSE AND CHILDREN

At least two pieces of legislation this session attempt to regulate controlled substances abuse through study and harsher penalties for crimes related to drug abuse. One increases the penalties for neglect of a child if the neglect is a result of drug abuse or production, while another authorizes the study of the effects of substance abuse or alcohol use during pregnancy.

FIGHTING METH

We have continued the crackdown on production of methamphetamine by allowing the destruction of contaminated equipment that was used to produce meth. These statewide regulations for meth labs will create uniform reporting and detection that will help law enforcement agencies get a handle on the problem.

STOPPING UNWANTED FAXES

Hoosiers now have protection against undesired fax advertisements, which authorizes the Indiana attorney general to recover civil penalties of up to \$1,500.

REDUCING SMOKING



Indiana takes further steps to reduce smoking in the state with legislation which allows an employer to implement financial incentives related to employer-provided health benefits to reduce employee tobacco use.

Indiana tightens eminent domain law

Improving protection for homeowners

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can use the process of eminent domain to take private property, such as homes and businesses, in order to hand it over to a private developer.

Indiana lawmakers immediately began working on a plan to protect the property rights of Hoosiers. Months of bipartisan work has resulted in legislation that tightens Indiana's eminent domain laws and restricts the ability of most government units to seize private property and transfer it to private entities for development.

The new legislation sets strict standards for property acquisition through eminent domain, and limits its use to only truly blighted and decaying properties. This will prevent a developer from being able to have a local government use eminent domain to seize your property simply because they think it might be a good spot for a new strip mall.

It received unanimous support, but there are still potential problems that need to be addressed. Most trou-



Rep. Brown (right) debates legislation on the House floor.

blesome is the fact that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is exempt from complying with the new restrictions.

There are concerns that INDOT will use this exemption to seize property for some of the road privatization projects proposed by the governor, such as the Interstate 69 extension or other unannounced projects in other areas of the state.

Improvements to Education

Education remains one of the most important topics we address at the Indiana General Assembly, and the 2006 session saw several improvements, as

much for what we didn't pass as what we did.

During the 2006 session, there was an attempt to move the ISTEP test from the fall to the spring of the school year. This move was opposed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Suellen Reed and others who felt the change was too costly and that it would not help in

identifying students having problems and providing remediation for them. After much debate, it was decided to make ISTEP reforms the subject of a comprehensive study by the Indiana Department of Education.

New legislation reinstates Indiana's Mentor Teacher Program, which provides professional support to veteran teachers who help in professional development of younger colleagues. Another bill offers high school dropouts the chance to earn their diplomas through the Fast Track program.

We also were able to stop efforts to expand public school vouchers and school choice programs, and I am very pleased that we were able to delay an effort to deregulate public education by eliminating hundreds of state laws on instruction and operation of our schools. Many of us feared this change would have caused funding to be eliminated for programs in such areas as early childhood intervention, summer school, vocational education and substance abuse prevention.

